

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF POLICE

SPECIAL ORDER NO. 17

May 16, 2003

**SUBJECT: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CITYWIDE WORKPLACE VIOLENCE
POLICY AND OPERATIONAL GUIDELINES**

PURPOSE: Every Department employee is entitled to a safe and healthy work environment. This premise, grounded in the authority of the Federal Occupational Health and Safety Act and the California Labor Code, underlies the commitment of the City of Los Angeles to do everything reasonably necessary to protect the life, safety and health of its employees. In keeping with this commitment, the Los Angeles City Council has adopted the Citywide Workplace Violence Policy and established guidelines for handling such incidents. The policy and guidelines resulted from a collaborative effort of the Joint Labor Management Committee, representing several City departments and other organizations. The City Council has instructed all City departments to incorporate the policy and guidelines into their personnel policies and procedures.

This Order incorporates the City's policy and guidelines for the prevention and management of violence in the workplace into the Department Manual. Additionally, this Order activates the Threat Assessment Team (TAT) and expands the responsibilities of the Threat Management Unit (TMU) to include investigating incidents of workplace violence.

POLICY: The safety and security of our employees, volunteers, and visitors is of paramount concern to the Department. In that regard, we are committed to maintaining a workplace free from violence or threats of violence. Thus, threats, threatening behavior, or acts of violence against an employee, a visitor, or any other individual cannot and will not be tolerated. All reports of workplace violence or threats of violence will be taken seriously and will be investigated promptly and thoroughly.

External Incidents.

Due to the unique mission of law enforcement, police officers and certain civilian employees, especially those in custodial assignments, receive threats of violence while performing their duties. In most cases, these threats are idle in nature and our employees are trained to recognize those incidents. When such an incident rises above an idle threat, laws and Department protocols are in place to effectively handle the matter, including prosecution of the suspect and protection for the

employee. Therefore, this policy focuses more on internal workplace threats.

Internal Incidents.

For the purpose of this policy on workplace violence, the Department workplace is considered to be employee interaction at any Department facility as well as any duty-related interaction between employees. Any form of violence or threat of violence (actual or reasonably perceived) involving a Department employee and occurring in the workplace must be reported without delay to a supervisor, commanding officer, or the Commanding Officer, Personnel Group. Such behavior must be reported whether it is committed by another Department employee or a City employee. If management determines that an employee has engaged in workplace violence, appropriate action must be taken, which may include discipline up to and including termination. Any violent behavior committed by an employee outside the workplace, which arises out of a contact made at the workplace, may also result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

All occurrences of violent behavior between employees will result in formal criminal and administrative investigations. Additionally, in all cases where violent behavior or a credible threat of violent behavior is directed at an employee, the Department will take appropriate legal action and/or other steps necessary to help protect the employee and/or the employee's family members.

An employee shall also report the existence of any restraining order that covers the employee at the workplace or any non-work related situation, such as stalking or domestic violence that may result in violence in the workplace. Under such circumstances, management will take appropriate precautions to help protect its employees in the workplace.

The types of behavior covered by this policy include, but are not limited to:

- * Violent physical actions directed by one employee to another;
- * Direct or implied threats to do harm to another employee or to another employee's property (including intimidating use of one's body or physical objects);
- * Verbally abusive or intimidating language or gestures;
- * Threatening, abusive, or harassing communication (i.e., phone calls, letters, memoranda, faxes, e-mail);

- * Unauthorized possession of a weapon at the workplace (including City parking lots);
- * Destructive or sabotaging actions against City or personal property;
- * Engaging in a pattern of unwanted or intrusive behavior against another (i.e., stalking, spying, following); and,
- * Violation of a restraining order.

Furthermore, the Department is committed to supporting the City's adopted policy on workplace violence. The Department will assist other City entities, where appropriate, in the prevention, investigation and prosecution of workplace violence.

PROCEDURE:

- I. EMPLOYEE'S RESPONSIBILITY.** Any form of violence or threat of violence, whether actual or reasonably perceived, involving a City employee and occurring in the workplace, shall be reported immediately to a supervisor. Any violent behavior by an employee outside the workplace, which is related to the workplace, shall also be reported to a supervisor.

An employee shall immediately notify his/her commanding officer, either directly or through a supervisor, regarding the existence of a Temporary Restraining Order, Restraining Order, Emergency Protective Order (EPO) or Order to Show Cause, in which the employee is either the petitioner or respondent.

Employees shall also notify their supervisor of any potentially violent non-work related situation that could likely result in violence in the workplace.

Note: When an officer obtains an EPO for workplace violence involving a City employee as the protected person, the officer shall notify the TMU, Detective Headquarters Division (DHD).

- II. SUPERVISOR'S RESPONSIBILITY.** All supervisors shall be familiar with workplace violence issues and shall be aware of potential warning signs of workplace violence. An individual may display early warning signs of potential violence such as a pattern of behavior or language which, if not addressed, could result in a violent act and/or emotional distress for others in the workplace. These warning signs include:

- * Changes in an individual's regular behavior patterns, especially a deterioration of general behavior and/or work performance;
- * Withdrawal from others at work;
- * Increased irritability or expressed feelings of victimization;
- * Belligerent or defiant behavior;
- * Harassing, abusive or threatening language;
- * Indirect threats, paranoid language or actions;
- * Fascination with weapons or with acts of violence; and,
- * Preoccupation with a particular City employee.

Supervisors who observe or become aware of behavior or early warning signs of potential workplace violence, shall attempt to diffuse the situation and immediately notify the TMU, DHD, and their commanding officer. If no other administrative report is required, supervisors shall document workplace violence incidents on an Employee's Report, Form 15.7, and forward it to their commanding officer.

III. COMMANDING OFFICER'S RESPONSIBILITY. Commanding officers shall create an atmosphere that encourages employees to report immediately incidents of workplace violence to a supervisor and shall:

- * Monitor all work environments to assess the potential for violence or threat of violence; and,
- * Identify existing security measures and take additional reasonable measures that could be implemented to improve workplace security.

In instances where an employee's observed behavior is creating disruption in the workplace, but attempts to diffuse the situation fail, the commanding officer shall follow existing Department procedures including those allowing an employee to be placed off-duty on paid administrative leave.

As soon as practicable after the occurrence of an incident creating potential danger, the commanding officer shall contact the Officer in Charge, TMU, DHD, to inform of the action taken and to obtain additional advice as necessary.

IV. DEPARTMENT THREAT ASSESSMENT TEAM. The TAT is responsible for the development, implementation, evaluation and

modification of the Department's workplace violence prevention program. The TAT shall be responsible for evaluating incidents of reported threats or acts of violence and, where appropriate, provide recommendations for intervention and management of the individual and/or the work site.

The TAT is comprised of the following Department personnel:

- * Coordinator;
- * Commanding Officer, DHD;
- * Officer in Charge, TMU, DHD;
- * Designated Behavioral Science Services (BSS) personnel; and,
- * Designated personnel from Medical Liaison Section, Personnel Division.

The TAT shall be chaired by the Department's Workplace Violence Prevention Coordinator. Additional members may be added to the team on an incident-by-incident basis, including a command officer, a supervisor from the employee's command or a representative from the employee's employee organization, if applicable.

The Commanding Officer, Personnel Group, will have the final authority on any action taken by the TAT.

V. THREAT MANAGEMENT UNIT, DETECTIVE HEADQUARTERS DIVISION RESPONSIBILITY. Other than those cases that are the responsibility of Robbery-Homicide Division (RHD) (2/645), the TMU, DHD, shall assume responsibility for criminal investigation of workplace violence incidents involving any City department wherein:

- * The suspect requires mental evaluation pursuant to 5150 of the Welfare and Institution Code;
- * The suspect meets the criteria for an arrest; or
- * An officer obtains an EPO for workplace violence involving a City employee as the protected person.

In those cases where it is unclear if the investigation is the responsibility of the TMU or RHD, the Commanding Officer, Detective Bureau, shall assign investigative responsibility.

Note: Professional Standards Bureau (PSB) will assume investigative responsibility for all administrative aspects of an incident(s).

In addition, the TMU, DHD, shall maintain a database of each case profile. The TMU, DHD, shall monitor the database for Department workplace violence trends and patterns and shall make recommendations as necessary.

VI. BEHAVIORAL SCIENCES SERVICES RESPONSIBILITY. The Chief Police Psychologist, BSS, is designated as the Department's Post Critical Incident Coordinator and shall be responsible for preparation and implementation of a Post Critical Incident Plan, which shall include but not be limited to:

- * Identifying and establishing a list of available mental health practitioners, including available Employee Assistance Program (EAP) resources who have expertise in trauma, crisis intervention, and critical incident stress debriefing;
- * Providing on-call personnel to respond immediately to the aftermath of a post-critical incident;
- * Establishing a system for communicating with highly affected employees and victims' families for ongoing psychological and human resource needs;
- * Creating a Death Notification Team by identifying and training appropriate BSS personnel to provide death and injury notifications when a Department employee(s) is involved;
- * Coordinating with the assigned criminal investigators and PSB as to what information may be shared with the affected employee(s) to reduce anxiety and misinformation;
- * Ensuring that all media contact occurs through the Media Relations Section;
- * Ensuring that each potentially affected employee has access to an on scene mental health support professional; and,
- * Providing for follow-up debriefings with each affected employee at the appropriate intervals following the aftermath of a post critical incident.

Note: Operational and follow-up investigative responsibility for the event remains the responsibility of the appropriate operational or detective command.

VII. CONTINUING EDUCATION DIVISION'S RESPONSIBILITY. Continuing Education Division, Training Group, shall ensure all employees receive training in workplace violence prevention and intervention.

AMENDMENT: This Order adds Sections 1/210.37 and 3/891 to the Department Manual and amends Sections 2/590, 2/560.01 and 2/642.31.

AUDIT RESPONSIBILITY: The Chief of Support Services, shall monitor compliance with this directive in accordance with Department Manual Section 0/080.30.

WILLIAM J. BRATTON
Chief of Police

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